Mr. Ashtons Ghost

To his late Companion in the

TOWER.

Ld. P.— I'm extreamly Mistaken or I hear some Body Walking about the Room—— Who is't that's so uncivil to disturb me at such an unseasonable Hour?

Ash (*drawing the Curtains.*) Start not my L—— I'm e'ne your Old *Friend and Fellow Traveller*, returnd from the Dead, much more willingly than we all did from *Graves-End*, when that ill-natured *Tar of a Captain*, wou'd by no means be so *generous*, to run away with us, and be Hanged for Company.

L. P. You must give me leave, good *Mr. Ghost*, to be a little cautious how I believe you. We live in very bad times, and if we can't trust the Inhabitants of this World, 'tis not very likely we shou'd find more honesty among those of the other. How finely were I cheated, if 'tis the Ghost of *Essex*, which appeares to me (for there's no Features in Shades, and I can't tell how to distinguish ye.) To be short, Show me your Credentials, and I'll believe you. Let me see the tother half of the Broken Six Pence and you shall know all my Heart the next moment. *vid Account of the late horrid Conspiracy.*

M. Ash. Upon the *Word of a Ghost*, I gave it to *Charon* for my passage——by the same token that he Grumbled Curfedly, and I'd much ado to perswade the Rascal to take it instead of his *Half-Penny*——But I'll give ye as good a *Token*. Your Lordship was this day at the Council, and I'll tell you in your Ear, (least any of the Warders shou'd be listning) what past there, and how you mannag'd your self in so tickliſh a juncture.

L. P. That any one may do, that has but a good Correspondence, without being either a *Conjurer or a Devil*. But I've one great Objection, against your being my *Old Friend*——If you are He, were not He and I Sentenced at the same time to be Hang'd, Drawn and Quartered—— the 19*th.* of *January*, and was not Sentence Executed on you the 28*th.* after? Now were you really my *Old Friend* the *Major*, we shou'd have you drop in like the Devil in *Dame Dobson*, her

a *Leg, and there an Arm*; first your Head, then your Bowels, and then your other Parts, when as I see you'r as *sound as a Roach*, and bating a little *black Ring about the Neck*, no sign of Hanging, Drawing, and Quartering, all over your whole Body,

M. Ash. Just as wisely might Iquestion, whether you were the *Witty Scotch Vicount*, I was formerly acquainted with, because you have your *Flesh and Blood still about you*, whereas he was Condenmed to the same *Death* I already suffered. The truth is the Government has been *more Merciful* to us both, then we could have expected, or did deserve. It let me scape with *no more then a fair Hanging*, and your L——p with *not so much*—— if it been't your own fault, and you han't a mind *to Hang your self.*

But to detain you in suspence no longer, I'll give you one Secret, and Infallible Token, that *I* am *I*, and that I have no design to Impose upon you—you know as well as I, that I was by, when you writ your *Memoirs*, and that I perswaded you to trust 'em, rather to your *Memory* then suffer a possibility of their ever rising up in Judgment against you. Besides I'm so far from being upon the Trappan with you, that I desire no acknowledgment from your L——p of what has past, either when you and I were acquainted, or since my kindness, and upon account of old acquaintance to inform you in some matter which may very much concern you, and where in my Judgmen is more alter'd, then you'd easily imagine, since I came into these Black Territories, where your Lordship is with as much impatience expected every moment, as our Masters great Enemy was at the *Hague*.

See Account as before

L. P. Nay, now you'd make me suspect you more then ever —— had you not given me such a Token as I can't answer. I'st possible that you who have been a *Martyr* for the Cause, and slid *of the Stage* with so much Decorum and Bravery, shou'd alter *your Principles* in 'tother World, when you dy'd for 'em here? I thought you had been all firm enough in that; whatever I may be in this, and that no change of place or condition, neither Heaven or Hell cou'd ever have made you started an inch from what you formerly professed.

Ash. My L——d, I come from a Countrey where Compliments are quite out of Fashion; where we see things as they are in their own Natures, strip't from all those odd Disguises, which Prejudice, Interest, or Humour, here dresses 'em in, and where you'l be certainly of my mind, the very next moment after you come thither, and which in a few more will make you forget most of the Politicks, which you have hitherto been learning all your life long.

L. P. Torment me then no longer, but by] our Old Friendship, if you are him whose Name you take, inform me what Sentiments you had of those things we have so oft discours'd, as soon as you Arrived in the other World.

M. Ash. You have heard, I suppose, how unconcernedly I went off from this, and that I dyed a *Traytor against my Country*, perhaps with as much Resolution as *Russel* and the rest of 'em, Died Martyrs for it.

L. P. I have, and of the kindness of your Ghostly Fathers —— How Zealous the little Spark of *I*—— was to clap you upon the *Shoulder in the last Conflict*, and what a deal of Maudlin grief their was at parting with so good a Friend, when they'd have made such excellent Company to have gon with you: I have heard too of your Speech deliver'd to the Sheriff, which our Party Swear is as *Infallible* as any Chapthe in the Bible, and is kept from the *Laity* for the same Reason that the Papists keep the Scriptures from 'em.

M. Ash. I confess, wou'd good store of my Quondam Friends, take the same way, and never speak Treason but when at the Gallows; the Government might find it worth the while, to Print their Speeches, as fast as they or the Club cou'd make 'em.—But otherwise, I my self can see no Reason why any Man shou'd Print a Libel against himself. The Friends of the Government, cannot sure be so weak, as to desire the gratification of a Foolish Curiosity, at the Expence of a real damage to what they respect and honour, nor can its Enemies with modesty expect to have their Fancies tickled with a mess of Treason, *Cum Privilegio*. Though all Truths wou'd bear the light, all Lies won't, and where there are more Fools then Wise, as undoubtedly may be found all the World over, 'tis no hurt to keep Edg'd Tools from 'em, lest they should make use of 'em to cut their own Fingers, or an honester and wiser Mans throat.

L. P. Why, you argue as if you were all perfect *Williamites* in 'tother World, and design'd to make us so in this. I expected far different discourse from the *Ghost of Major* Ashton.

M. Ash. I was just telling you what Converted me. The very *FIRST STEP* that I made into the Infernal Regions, before my body was well covered in St. *Faiths*, (whither I expect shortly to have my Tomb-stone worn as deep with the knees of those good Catholicks, who come to adore my Heretical Dust, as St. *Patricks* Well, or the Marbles before the Shrine of *Thomas a Becket:*) But who shou'd I see there but the Protomartyr of the Cause, poor *Cross*, who was Hang'd 'tother day, (and shou'd us what we must all come to) for nothing, but a *little Voyage that he made aboard the* French *Fleet*, when they lay upon our Coast last Summer. He had about him the whole *Rabble of Devils* at his first Arrival, and looke exactly like a *Pick-Pocket*, when fallen into the clutches of their mortal Mob. However, they were civiler to him then those wou'd have been above Ground, and gave him Law for his Life, hurrying him away before Judg *Æacus*, who was then trying Causes at *Pluto*'s Court, where appeared at least a thousand Witnesses, against him summoned by his own Conscience, and two or three false Loons of Devils, who first tempted him to sin, and afterwards discovered him, all these gave their Affidavits, that he endeavoured to betray his Country, and Corresponded with its inveterate, and declared Enemies—and upon the clear proof of the whole, he was immediately Sentenced to be cast into the same Copper, where *Judas*, *Herostratus*, *Guy Faux*, *Tarperia*, and all the odious Traytors to their Country, or Friends are to be tortured, till a *Jacobite* loves the *Protestant Religion*, and hates the King of *France* and his own good Godfather—your L—p may easily guess how much this Allarm'd me—I immediately fell a trembling, and 'twas well I was nothing but Spirit, for had I been still chained to a Body, something not very pleasant about me had certainly betray'd me.

If this Fool of a Rogue has such hard treatment, what thought I, am I to expect, if once the truth is known to these grim Justices? On the whole, I'me thought it the wisest way to step to the Bar of my own accord, where falling on my knees, I'me fairly confessed the whole Fact before any one accused me, that I with *several other false Traytors had Conspired to overturn and destroy my own Country and Government*, and that this poor wretch just then Condemned, had a much less share in the Villany, then I my self had.

L. P Was this the way to obtain any Mitigation, or wou'd it not rather make you fare worse than he that went before you?

M. Ash. There was no other Remedy —— I knew 'twas but broyling for't at last. But besides I found out an Expedient which got me at least a Reprieve, whatever may become of a Pardon, I *Humbly proposed to the Judges*, who looke much more angry upon me, then those at the Old Baily that I'd return agen to Life, and perswade those Persons who were concerned with me in the same Villanies, to abandon their Cursed designs, and discover all they knew ou't, giving my Parole of Honour to come back agen as soon as I had accomplished my Errand.

This wrought so much on the Sooty-Faced Gentlemen, that I obtain'd leave, and accordingly the first Person I address my self to is your L——p, both upon account of the past intimacy which has been between us, and because it may conduce

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very much to the Mitigation of my Torments, if I can take off so considerable a Person as your L——p from that cause which I am like to Suffer so much for in tother World, as well as this.

L. P. You tell me wonders—but 'tis still a greater to me how Hell comes to be so angry with our design, or why, as our Predecessors in the Gunpowder-Plot used to say, Satan discovered what we were about, or is since so mightily concerned at it; since had the *Grand Lewis* powr'd his Army in, as we had proposed, those below had undoubtedly receiv'd *whole Legions* of Souls every day crouding down to e'm, from every part of the Conquered Nation.

M. Ash. Notwithstanding all this they fear the example and tho they love *Treason* very well, I find they hate the *Traytor* as much as any of our moral Politicians. For shou'd those who live under so happy a Government as the *English* at present enjoy (say they among themselves) once Rebel against it and bring in the *French*, to torment enslave and destroy them if once they accomplish their design, all *Europe* is undoubtedly their own and in that as good as all the world when once the Grand *Lewis*, is *Universal Monarch* of the upper *World* ten to one but he'll have such a *Freak* come into his Head as *Alexander*, the Great had and have a Months mind for a Touch at the other *World* when he has conquer'd all his own and among these ours lies most open to his attempts both because, he's now very old and *Sinfull* and not likely to stay long above before he gives us a visit and makes his last *Campaign* amongst us and because his *Ludores* have already made him such a party here by the help of his many *Agents*, which are come hither before him that *Lucifer*, himself would hardly be safe in his Throne, but be daily in danger of *Abdication* and being the last conquest to the *French* Arms and Policies.

L. P. What course then wou'd you advise me to take in order to my own happiness and yours—You know several Gentlemen of my acquaintance and yours, will not be slack to tell me I must certainly have *School Butter* in 'tother World, if *I tell Tales out of School* in this; and o' 'tother side, dare pawn their own Souls for mine, that if I hold right to the Scaffold, my Soul shall be in Paradice, as soon as my *Head* leaps off from my *Shoulders*.

M. Ash. 'Tis at your Liberty to believe them or me, as your L—p thinks fit. But to be free, the Question lies thus,—whether you can expect Heaven for endeavouring to Ruin Earth, and whether 'tis so Meritorious a thing, as some pretend, whatever they think, to betray a Man's Native Country, to a much more barbarous Enemy than either *Turk* or *Tartar*.

After all, if your L——p has a Passion for being Headed or Hanged in this world, and Damned in the next, I have discharged my Conscience, and done like a Ghost of Honour——In the mean time I'll about the rest of my Embassie, and see what Fortune I shall meet with among the remainder of my Old Friends.

L. P. If common Interests and Dangers have any Power, I conjure you by them to stay a Minute longer, and resolve me 2 or 3 very material Questions.

M. Ash. We don't forget every thing as soon as our Moths are cold, and therefore if I'm not forbidden by the Laws of the dark Kingdom, I'll give you all the satisfaction I'm able.

L. P. My first Query is—*which will be out first, this Year, the* French *Fleet, or the* English?

M. Ash. In that my L- your *Memoires* have fail'd you. The dilligence of the Government, and readiness of the Seamen, the encouragement of the Proclamation; Reforming Officers, and Kicking *Old Grizzel out of doors*, have brought matters into so good a posture, that the Fleet is now in better Order then 'twas last Year by *May*, and whereas your Judgment was, 'twou'd not be out before *June*, you'll certainly see a great part on't ready before the end of this Month.

L. P. How did Mr. *Reading* and Mrs. *Reading* receive the News of our disappointment—our Factors being broken, our being nonsuited in our Law business, and the Lord of the Mannors sitting faster, and being more lov'd and fear'd then ever,—you know my meaning—for you are no stranger to this Language.

M. Ash. Mr. *Reading* was almost in as bad a condition as his Grandfather used to be, & poor Mrs. *Reading* was in ten times more fright and pain, then at her last Lying In.

L. P. One word more and I've done—shall I have my Life, or must I follow you.

M. Ash. —*Ask your L—y that*—tho' you your self know whether you can, or will do any thing to deserve it. But my time is past—*I must to the rest*——Adue.

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